

Re: Accused priests

Specht, Charlie

Wed 4/10/2019 4:29 PM

To: Spangler, Kathy <kspangler@buffalodiocese.org>

Hi Kathy,

Thanks for the clarification.

Good news -- I was able to track down some additional documentation on all but two of these cases. Bishop Grosz's files state quite clearly that all but three of the priests were accused of sexual abuse of minors.

One of the priests -- Msgr. Albert Rung -- "did not follow up with report of abuse of scout master," according to the files.

Still unclear:

Fr. [REDACTED] (Conv. Franciscan, we have reached out to the province)

Fr. [REDACTED] -- Diocesan, unclear.

Do you deny that either of the last two priests were accused of sexual misconduct?

Also a question of procedure -- does the review board even determine substantiated/not substantiated when there is "only" one allegation against a deceased priest? In other words, I'm asking why you could not acknowledge that they were substantiated/not substantiated, even while acknowledging they have one accusation on record against them.

Thanks,
Charlie

From: Spangler, Kathy <kspangler@buffalodiocese.org>

Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 4:09 PM

To: Specht, Charlie

Subject: RE: Accused priests

Hi Charlie,

You misread my email.

We do deny that there are allegations of sexual misconduct against all of the 11 priests. We provided a lengthy explanation why a priest's name might appear on the agenda of the Review Board for discussion.

We also made clear that when a claim is substantiated, we make an announcement to that effect, and the priest is added to our publicized list.

Blessings,
Kathy

From: Specht, Charlie [mailto:Charlie.Specht@WKBW.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 3:31 PM

To: Spangler,Kathy
Cc: lfq@connorsllp.com
Subject: Re: Accused priests

Hi Kathy,

We wanted to give you a chance to deny that any of the allegations against the 11 priests involve sexual misconduct. You did not do so, and we will make that clear.

Also, you mentioned substantiated/unsubstantiated -- we also gave you a chance to make clear which allegations have been substantiated, which have not been substantiated and which are still being adjudicated. You did not do that either, but should you change your mind, I would be happy to accept any clarifications.

Thanks again,
Charlie

From: Spangler,Kathy <kspangler@buffalodiocese.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 3:05 PM
To: Specht, Charlie
Subject: RE: Accused priests

Good afternoon Charlie,

The Review Board considers primarily claims of child sexual abuse. From time to time, however, the Board also considers matters that involve claims of sexual conduct between adults and matters that have nothing to do with sexual conduct at all. Additionally, sometimes a claim made against a priest is withdrawn when the accuser realizes that he or she made a mistake or is uncertain about the identity of the accused. Other times, after an accusation has been made and presented to the Review Board, the accuser realizes (sometimes during the investigation) that the name originally provided for the accused was slightly off or entirely incorrect. Other times, a priest's name is presented to the Board when the accuser is claiming only that the priest did not properly handle abuse perpetrated by a different person. As a result, the fact that a priest's name is on a Review Board agenda does not mean that he has been associated with a claim of sexual abuse. In fact, your most recent email contained the names of several priests who definitely are not the subject of an accusation of abuse.

Additionally, even when the diocese presents an accusation to the Review Board, the diocese does not automatically add the priest's name to its publicized list. As the diocese announced last year in November, it has received reports of sexual abuse of minors against over 130 diocesan priests and over 40 religious order priests. The names of the accused priests are added to the public list only if the claim can be substantiated following a thorough investigation. If an investigation cannot be conducted because, for example, the priest is deceased or belongs to a religious order, the diocese will add the priest's name to the list without conducting an investigation if the diocese learns of more than one claim against the priest.

Finally, by reporting each and every one of these claims to the Review Board, which is the entity responsible for reviewing them, the diocese is doing the very opposite of "covering up." Victim-survivors may want to speak with you after you improperly use a confidential list to contact them, but the diocese will respect its commitment of confidentiality to the victim-survivors and the confidentiality of the Review Board proceedings until a determination is made that a claim is substantiated or not.

Blessings,
Kathy

From: Specht, Charlie [<mailto:Charlie.Specht@WKBW.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2019 9:27 AM

To: Spangler, Kathy
Cc: lfq@connorsllp.com
Subject: Re: Accused priests

Hi Kathy,

First, thank you for the clarification regarding Fr. Westfield. We will update our reporting to reflect that.

For the rest of the priests, I want to be clear about our reporting process and what we have found, in the hopes that you can fill in blanks and we can get the most accurate information out to the public.

The scenarios you outline in the first paragraph of your email are relevant, but only if you can get into specifics about which priests these apply to. (Essentially, if you tell me which cases DO NOT involve sexual misconduct allegations, we will most likely either tell the public they do not involve sexual misconduct, or take them out of the story altogether -- as we did with Fr. Wardenski).

We have spoken with the victims of the following priests and they describe allegations (child or adult) of sexual abuse/sexual misconduct/child pornography:

Fr. James Bartnik - minor
Msgr. Joseph F. Coughlin - adult
Fr. John Doyle - minor
Fr. Ralph Federico - minor
Fr. William Lanphear - minor
Msgr. Richard O'Brien - minor
Msgr. Ted Berg - child porn
Fr. John Donnelly - minor
Fr. Francis Kealy - minor
Fr. Gerald Collins - exact nature of allegation unclear
Fr. Joseph Garin - exact nature of allegation unclear
Msgr. Maurice Woulfe -- victim says this is not an allegation of abuse by Woulfe, but rather Woulfe's cover-up of attempted assault on her by a Boston priest at national CYO convention.

For the priests below, we have not spoken with the victims because we do not know their last names. If you could please make it clear whether they are facing allegations of sexual abuse/misconduct/child pornography, that would greatly inform whether (and how) we describe them in our story. (Also, if the review board found the claims substantiated/what was the outcome of the case?)

Absent this information, we will likely list them as being on the review board agenda (which, multiple sources confirm, exists for the primary reason of evaluating sexual misconduct allegations), having some type of allegation against them, and the diocese refused to say whether it related to sexual misconduct. This strikes me as the worst possible alternative for both of us because it makes it seem as if Bishop Malone is "covering up" for these priests and not being transparent, and it makes our reporting less descriptive and precise. Lawlor has publicly stated a concern for the reputations of priests who are wrongfully accused or deceased. It seems the best way to protect their reputations (and to allow for healing for the victims) would be total transparency in this regard.

Fr. George Cotter
Msgr. Francis Hanna
Msgr. Albert Rung
Msgr. Francis Gowney
Fr. Joseph H. Penkaul
Fr. [REDACTED]
Msgr. Edmund Dietzel

Fr. [REDACTED]
Fr. John Fox
Fr. James Kasprzyk
Fr. Nelson Kinmartin

These three priests below are religious order priests. I have reached out to the appropriate religious orders, but if you can clarify, again, whether the allegations do or do not relate to sexual misconduct, that would be helpful.

Br. Michael Latrello -- Brothers of Mercy referred me back to you for more info. on this.
Frs. Cairnan Haggerty and Gervaise White -- Franciscans (Holy Name Province) acknowledged their cases are under investigation, but have not clarified whether they are sex misconduct cases.

Thanks again for your help. We will need to hear from you with updated information by 2 p.m. today. I have copied Lawlor on this email, as well.

Charlie

From: Spangler, Kathy <kspangler@buffalodiocese.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 9, 2019 3:25 PM
To: Specht, Charlie
Subject: RE: Accused priests

Good afternoon Charlie,

The Review Board considers primarily claims of child sexual abuse. From time to time, however, the Board also considers matters that involve claims of sexual conduct between adults and matters that have nothing to do with sexual conduct at all. Additionally, sometimes a claim made against a priest is withdrawn when the accuser realizes that he or she made a mistake or is uncertain about the identity of the accused. Other times, after an accusation has been made and presented to the Review Board, the accuser realizes (sometimes during the investigation) that the name originally provided for the accused was slightly off or entirely incorrect. Other times, a priest's name is presented to the Board when the accuser is claiming only that the priest did not properly handle abuse perpetrated by a different person. As a result, the fact that a priest's name is on a Review Board agenda does not mean that he has been associated with a claim of sexual abuse. In fact, the most recent abbreviated list you provided contained the names of several priests who definitely are not the subject of an accusation of abuse.

Additionally, even when the diocese presents an accusation to the Review Board, the diocese does not automatically add the priest's name to its publicized list. As the diocese announced last year in November, it has received reports of sexual abuse of minors against over 130 diocesan priests and over 40 religious order priests. The names of the accused priests are added to the public list only if the claim can be substantiated following a thorough investigation. If an investigation cannot be conducted because, for example, the priest is deceased or belongs to a religious order, the diocese will add the priest's name to the list without conducting an investigation if the diocese learns of more than one claim against the priest.

Although the 2012 matter regarding Fr. Westfield did not involve an accusation of abuse, it was thoroughly investigated and presented to the Review Board. In 2018, the diocese received a confidential complaint, and information apparently was stolen and provided to WKBW. The person who made the allegation in 2018 initially thought that his abuser might be Fr. Westfield and later, after reviewing information and photographs, withdrew the allegation against him. All the information was presented to the Review Board.

Charlie, you should know that other reporters have obtained a similar Review Board agenda containing many of the same names, and for the foregoing reasons, they did not publicize it.

Blessings,
Kathy

From: Specht, Charlie [<mailto:Charlie.Specht@WKBW.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2019 4:29 PM
To: Spangler, Kathy
Subject: Accused priests

Hi Kathy,

I just wanted to remind you we are closing in on the deadline for clarification on the following accused priests (I sent you the original request last week):

Fr. James Bartnik
Fr. Gerald Collins
Fr. Joseph Garin
Fr. George Cotter
Msgr. Joseph F. Coughlin
Fr. John Donnelly
Fr. John Doyle
Fr. Ralph Federico
Fr. Cairnan Haggerty
Msgr. Francis Hanna
Fr. Francis Kealy
Fr. William Lanphear
Msgr. Richard O'Brien
Msgr. Ted Berg
Msgr. Albert Rung
Fr. Gervaise White
Msgr. Francis Growney
Fr. Joseph H. Penkaul
Fr. Carlton (CJ) Westfield
Msgr. Maurice Woulfe
Fr. [REDACTED]
Msgr. Edmund Dietzel
Fr. [REDACTED]
Fr. John Fox
Fr. James Kasprzyk
Fr. Nelson Kinmartin
Br. Michael Latrello

We plan to make their names public, as well as the allegations in whatever detail we have found. In a couple cases, our reporting showed that the priest should not have been on any list, so we intentionally kept them off. I would like to give the diocese the opportunity to clarify the nature of the allegations (child/adult, time period, outcome) and to paint a fuller picture of what is being alleged.

Also, the only active priest on the list is Fr. Carlton Westfield. I have attached a document from Bishop Malone's files about what is alleged with him in relation to N. Chautauqua Catholic School. Just wanted to make sure you were aware of that to give you an opportunity to respond.

We will give you until 5 p.m. Tuesday, but the earlier the better.

Thanks,
Charlie

Charlie Specht
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